



Lyndon B Johnson

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Vice President to JFK
(1960-1963)

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President
(Nov 1963-Jan 1969)

About

- Larger than life lifestyle
 - Big ego
 - Believed in freedom for ALL
 - No president wanted to do more for African-Americans
 - 6'2" Texan
 - 65 yrs old when entering office
 - Intimidated lawmakers in order to get what he wanted ("the Johnson Treatment")
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Foreign Policy in the beginning

- Wanted a stronger US presence in Vietnam refusing to lose the war
- Believed strongly in Containment
- Believed the USSR and Communism were threats to American people, freedom, and capitalism
- He did support JFK's policies and decisions while VP

Vietnam War Background and Pre-LBJ

- North Vietnam- communist regime led by Ho Chi Minh
 - South Vietnam- non-communist led by Ngo Dinh Diem
 - Reason for US involvement- to stop Communism from spreading to South Vietnam and the rest of Asia
 - JFK increased involvement by establishing the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam which advised and trained the South Vietnamese military
 - Fall 1963-16,000 US personnel
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Sudden Transition

Sworn in as president on
November 22nd, 1963
(day of the JFK assassination)

- On November 1st there is a coup against Diem
 - Leads to instability and an increase of Communist raids in the south
 - Increased attacks on the countryside
 - LBJ assumes office just as the situation in Vietnam worsened
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LBJ on Vietnam while entering office

**“I am not going to be the president who
saw Southeast Asia go the way China
went”**

Gulf Of Tonkin

August 4th, 1964

- Attack on the US destroyers *Maddox* and *C. Turner Joy* by North Vietnam
 - LBJ insists that the attacks were “unprovoked”
 - Ordered retaliatory strikes on North Vietnamese gunboats and supporting facilities
 - Raises concerns with the Security Council of the UN
 - Seeks a resolution from Congress to heighten the war
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Tonkin Conspiracy?

1. Publicly it was “unprovoked aggression”, Privately LBJ and SOD Robert McNamara question the US military covert operations
 - OPLAN 34A (Jan 16th '64) allowed for the military to seize control of these operations from the CIA
2. Most Likely... It didn't even happen
 - “Our destroyers were just shooting at phantom targets... There were no [North Vietnamese] boats there...” -Navy Commander James Stockdale who was flying reconnaissance over the gulf on the 4th
 - “Overeager sonar operators”- Captain Herrick

Gulf Of Tonkin Resolution

Signed into Law
August 10th, 1964

- Unanimous in The House and 98-2 in the Senate
 - Authorized “all measures necessary” to prevent more attacks
 - LBJ viewed this as a functional declaration of war
 - The Vietnam War was never truly declared by Congress
 - Greatly increases his power
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Aired on Sep 7th, 1964

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- Paints LBJ as a man of peace
- Wins the '65 election in a landslide over the Rep. Barry Goldwater
- He then increases war effort

US Involvement Intensifies

“Slow Squeeze” Policy moving to a more involved foreign policy

- Slowly increasing military force and presence In Vietnam and surrounding areas
- Dec 14 '64- Nov '68- bombs NV supply lines in Laos, Cambodia
- March 2nd '65- Operation Rolling Thunder begins
 - Sustained bombings on NV
 - Hoped Hanoi (capital of NV) would stop support of rebels in the South
- LBJ “Be very careful we don't show that we are desperate and dramatic and we are changing our policy”
 - Feared backlash from the public and that it would hinder his domestic agenda
 - Ex) Voting Rights Act, Civil Rights Act, Medicare Bill

Sending troops in and a new plan

- March 8th '65- 2 Marine battalions and 3,500 troops are sent
 - 1st time combat forces are sent to mainland Asia since the Korean War
 - April 3rd- 2 more Marine battalions, an air squadron, and 20,000 more men
 - Change to ACTIVE defense and preparatory work for more troops
 - November- 175,000 troops
 - By '66- additional 100,00 sent
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U.S. impact on war

- Much more troops sent, making the war bigger
 - More money sent
 - Gave South Vietnam much more help
 - South Vietnam able to compete with North Vietnam
 - More resources and troops sent
 - Large death toll of American soldiers
 - Anti-war movement in America
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Opposition at Home



Why?

- By Nov '67
 - US casualties were over 15,000
 - \$25 Billion/yr
 - 40,000 men were drafted/ month
 - Took money away from domestic programs
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Protests

“LBJ how many kids did you kill today”

- 1968- Only 35% of Americans approved of LBJ’s policies/actions
- October 21, 1967- The March on the Pentagon
 - 50,000 protesters marched in effort to try to end the vietnam war
 - 700 are arrested
- Vietnam Veterans Against War
 - Men on crutches and in wheelchairs being broadcast to Americans
- Students for a Democratic Society
 - College based group
 - Part of the “hippie movement”- didn’t approve of the aggressive actions of LBJ



Tet Offensive ('68)

- North aids South Vietnamese communists plan strikes on the Hue and Saigon (cities with a high US presence)
- Similar to the Kamikaze strategy
- Breached the US Embassy in Saigon
 - Shows the strength of rebels in the South and that the US didn't have a strong hold
- LBJ and top officials had been saying that the US was winning the war and it was coming to a close
 - Loses even more support for the war and trust
- Escalates protests against the war
 - My Lai Massacre on March 16th came out in '69 and increased opposition more

The Cost Of War

- 48,658 U.S. Casualties while Lyndon B. Johnson was in office

Outside of Vietnam

Cuba and Panama

- Cuba- Fidel Castro demanded return of the Guantanamo Naval Base, shut off water supply, US created own supply and the Cubans backed down
 - Panama- riots against US control and possible attack
 - Riots lasted 3 days killing 21 Panamanians and 4 US troops
 - Response- negotiated new trade with the zone, threatened the CIA reported communist party that he would send in more troops
 - LBJ renewed relations and stabilized the area for his time
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Dominican Republic Crisis

April 28th 1965

- Coup had taken place and a Communist regime was about to be installed
 - 1,000 Americans were taking refuge
 - Fear of “another Cuba”
 - LBJ sends 30,000 soldiers in within 3 weeks
 - Skepticism
 - Supported action through release of names of Communists in the DR. Many were dead and many weren't communists
 - Increases criticism of LBJ and his administration
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Superpower Diplomacy

- Outer Space Treaty (Jan '67)
with the USSR
 - Banned nuclear weapons from going into orbit around the Earth and all other bodies
 - Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (US joins in July '68)
 - Banned the trade of nuclear weapons and information about how to make them to other nations
 - Reduces fear and and lessens danger
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End of Presidency



Transitioning Out

- March 31st '68- agrees on TV to lessen bombings, to seek peace in Southeast Asia, and does not seek '69 election
 - There were 535,000 troops in Vietnam by the time he left office
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Legacy

- Heightened the Vietnam War
 - Eventually ended in a stalemate
 - Increased the role of the President
 - Expanded US Foreign Policy
 - Kept information from the public and exaggerated situations in order to gain support
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Questions?



Outside Sources

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=28970>

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/tet>

<http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-protests>